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ABSTRACT

This publication is a series of role guides written by appropriate role group representatives that address the issues of effective schooling from the perspectives of six different role groups. The publication outlines how the following six key role groups might contribute to schools that are striving to become academically effective for all children: school boards, central administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and community educators. An introduction lists the following minimum characteristics of effective schools: (1) safe and orderly environment; (2) clear school mission; (3) instructional leadership; (4) high expectations; (5) opportunity to learn and student time on task; (6) frequent monitoring of student progress; and (7) home-school relations. Also included is a summary of the fundamental steps in the school improvement process. (SI)

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INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

The need for instructional improvement in America's schools has been thoroughly documented and publicized over the past few years. One of the responses to this need has been the Effective Schools Movement. Leading Effective School proponents such as Edwards, Lezotte, Brookover and others contend that given the right conditions, all students can and will learn. They further assert that schools can in fact control these conditions and should therefore be held accountable for academic achievement and mastery of basic skills.

The cumulative body of research known as the "effective schools studies" makes some important distinctions between effective and less effective schools. According to research, effective schools are those that successfully bring all children, regardless of background, to minimum levels of academic mastery.

Specifically an effective school:

- brings a high proportion of its pupils to a level of minimum mastery of essential academic skills;
- is as effective in educating its poorest children to that level as it is for the middle and upper income students; and
- has been consistently providing this education for at least three years (Edmonds, 1979).

Researchers have identified a number of schools which meet this definition. Effective schools do exist, and they share a number of common qualities. To be effective, schools must possess the following minimum characteristics. We cannot, at this time, apply an order, but we know that each characteristic exists.

Characteristics of the Effective School

1. Safe and Orderly Environment: There is an orderly, purposeful atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm. However, the atmosphere is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning.

2. Clear School Mission: There is a clearly-articulated mission of the school through which the staff shares an understanding of a commitment to instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability.
3. Instructional Leadership: The principal acts as the instructional leader who effectively communicates the mission of the school to the staff, parents and students who understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program of the school.
4. High Expectations: The school displays a climate of expectation in which the staff believes and demonstrates that students can attain mastery of basic skills and that they (the staff) have the capability to help students achieve such mastery.
5. Opportunity to Learn and Student Time On Task: Teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in basic skill areas. For a high percentage of that allocated time, students are engaged in planned learning activities.
6. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress: Feedback on student academic progress is frequently obtained. Multiple assessment methods such as teacher-made tests, samples of students' work, mastery skills checklists, criterion-referenced tests and norm-referenced tests are used. The results of testing are used to improve individual student performance and to also improve the instructional program.
7. Home-School Relations: Parents understand and support the basic mission of the school and are made to feel that they have an important role in achieving this mission (Fauthier, W.J., et al. 1982).

Schools do not represent a single constituency however, therefore, school effectiveness will be a product of shared responsibility. To this end there are

certain role groups which are critical to the ultimate outcomes of schooling.

The focus of this publication is directed toward the following key role groups and how they might contribute to schools that are striving to become academically effective for all children.

Key Role Groups Associated With Effective Schools
- School Boards
- Central Administrators
- Principals
- Teachers
- Parents
- Community Educators

This publication, then, is a series of role guides written by appropriate role group representatives which addresses the issues of effective schooling from six different role group perspectives. It is intended to stimulate new ideas for those already involved in effective schooling as well as to generate interest among those who are new to the concept.

ROLE GUIDE #1

THE SCHOOL BOARD AND EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

by Willis Crain, Chairman
Chester County School Board
and
George C. Leventis
Director of Legal Services
S.C. School Boards Association

Introduction

The perspective of the school board member of the effective schools movement is one of cautious optimism and controlled delight. Most school board members in South Carolina will have had very little direct exposure to the massive body of research currently available on the subject. It appears, however, that this type of research is very compatible with the personality of the typical board member. As in all role group studies, a "norm" must be established for the purpose of setting legitimate expectations and developing reasonable strategies for achieving them. To attempt to adequately define responsibilities, roles and skills of board members relative to the successful implementation of the effective schools research, generalization must be made concerning the perspective of the "typical" board member relative to the effective schools research.

The good news for board members will be that while the methods of such research are typically complex and treacherous, the results are easy to understand. The unabashedly optimistic conclusion of the research is that effective schools do make a difference in academic achievement, regardless of the demographic variables that exist in the student population. This profoundly simplistic summarization of an exhaustive body of empirical documentation will come as a great relief to board members. What they, as well as the rest of the world, had been hearing for many years since 1966 (Coleman, et.al) is that the schools do not have a measurable

impact on the improvement of learning compared to family background.

Thus, the effective schools movement is breathing new life into school boards and school districts everywhere. The commitment of school board members to the goal of providing quality education to the student has never wavered, but the hope of success has. If the result of all of these discussions is to do no more than convince school board members in all districts that they have a chance of improving learning, it will have accomplished much. If it also offers the means to provide such improvement, its impact on the future of public education in this state will be profound.

Overview of Responsibility for Developing More Effective Schools

The responsibility of the school board for developing more effective schools is fundamental. The board's major function is to develop and adopt district policy governing many facets of school operations, including employment of staff personnel, administration of pupil services, educational programs, instructional material, school facilities, equipment, finance and support services. As the policy-making, goal-setting, governing body of the district, the school board has considerable responsibility for the ultimate success or failure of any effort to improve school effectiveness.

What is unclear is the implication of such over-reaching responsibility in this area. Can the school board really make a positive difference in this area? Little research to date has focused on the most effective ways of providing assistance to school improvement from the board level. Obviously, the board room was not the place to begin a search for answers to the questions on how to make the school an effective learning medium. The primary focus was, as it should have seen, on the individual school and even the individual classroom. The case needed to be made that a comprehensive approach to school improvement could yield dramatic results in

student learning everywhere.

Having now made the case, time should be devoted to doing research on the most effective kinds of district-level improvement efforts. While many of the first school improvement success stories will not be directly related to school board efforts to bring them about, the board will be the hope for many schools which have not yet embraced the concept. While effective schools may "bubble-up" on their own, regardless of what a school board does to promote them, the better course of action is active participation from the "top down" in this area. A total commitment from the board room to the classroom is the most reliable way of assuring the success of the school improvement project.

Specific Actions To Be Taken

The dimension of school improvement that lends itself best to direct school board involvement is the leadership dimension. Donald MacKenzie, in his review of recent trends in the school improvement research, aptly sums up the natural attractiveness of the research to school board members:

> Despite the value of more rigorous studies, it is precisely the intuitive appeal of case studies in school leadership that has made them so potent. Because such studies deal with the school as a whole, and view schooling as a complex and dynamic activity within a concrete and historically changing situation, such studies appeal directly to the common sense and the daily experience of working educators. It is no coincidence that much of this research grew directly from the concerns of state and district boards and that their results are being translated with remarkable speed into action for school improvement at the district level. ...

> ... But if the new research on school effectiveness holds any special promise for transforming actual practice, it lies in the straightforward effort to revive feelings of optimism among school administrators and classroom teachers, and to encourage a new sense of efficacy and purpose in education.

With these calls to action firmly entrenched in our minds, we must realistically evaluate what is possible to do to assist the school improvement effort. The Seattle Public School Board conducted an intensive study of the effective schools movement as a part of its ongoing effort to improve the quality of education in the district. Their conclusions led the Board to establish four broad role areas for the school board in this area. They are:

(1) To adopt policies and set priorities

(2) To communicate clear goals and objectives

(3) To appropriate funds for priority items

(4) To improve staff and district stability

The goals are very broad and all encompassing. This is the type of role we would expect from the school board. We must resist the temptation to put into the actual implementation of the school improvement model in the schools. The most appropriate role is to use the four goals adopted by the Seattle Board and apply them to the seven criteria for effective schools that have been gleamed from the research:

(1) Safe and Orderly Environment

(2) Clear and Focused School Mission

(3) Instructional Leadership

(4) Climate of High Expectations

(5) Opportunity to Learn and Student Time On Task

(6) Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

(7) Home-School-Community Relations

If these goals are used to assist in the establishment of the seven criteria throughout the schools in the district, the board will have fulfilled its primary mission to improve the quality of education in the district. The board should establish the proper environment for school improvement to thrive in. The staff must then plant the seeds of improvement and harvest the crop of higher output. All of society will reap the benefits.

Skills Required

The skills required of school board members to accomplish the goals set forth above are basically the skills that one needs generally to be an effective school board member. A partial listing is found in the publication entitled "Becoming a Better Board Member" by the National School Boards Association:

(1) Ability to assembly and evaluate information

(2) Communication skills

(3) Representation skills

(4) Policy and decision-making skills

(5) Ability to use and retain the board's authority

(6) Organizational skills

(7) Ability to effectively use human and material resources

(8) Political skills

(9) Ability to function in small and large meetings

(10) Ability to perform under pressure and to deal with conflict

It will require the use of all of these skills by each board member to accomplish the type of school improvement possible as a result of adherence to the effective schools criteria. There are various degrees of involvement in all human undertakings. As with most worthwhile endeavors, the harder the board works at assuring the existence of the criteria for effective schools in each school, the more likely they are to see

measurable improvement. With an eye towards improving the education attainment of all students, the essence of the task is set forth by Locke:

> "He that has found a way to keep a child's spirit easy, active and free, and yet at the same time to restrain him from many things he has a mind to, and to draw him to things that are uneasy to him, has, in my opinion, got the true secret of education."

Hopefully, we will recognize the hard work needed to realize the true potential of of all our students. We owe them no less.

McKenzie, Donald E., "Research for School Improvement: An Appraisal of Some Recent Trends", Educational Researcher, April 1983, pp. 5-16.

Milwaukee Public Schools, "Project Rise Local School Plan", August, 1982.

Seattle Public Schools, "Effective Schools Seminar Report", . February, 1982.

ROLE GUIDE #2

THE ROLE OF CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

by Ronald A. McWhirt, Superintendent
Charleston County School District
and
Nancy Sargent, Director of Curriculum
Charleston County School District

The following Central Office Role is based on the incorporation of effective school research into a school-based management approach to instructional improvement.

The report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education released in April has had a tremendous effect on the nation's awareness of the need for substantially improving our schools. The Commission emphasizes that the responsibility for addressing the problems it identifies must be shared by all Americans and, particularly, that the moment must be seized by leaders at the local level. This call for local responsibility not only reflects convictions about the appropriate role for the federal government, but it is also consistent with research on the importance of district and school level leadership in bringing about the desired change. (Fullan, 1982).

The Commission only indirectly addressed the importance of creating organizational environments for effective teaching and learning. Both experience and research (e.g., Purkey and Smith, 1983; Rosenholtz, Hawley, and Goodstein, 1983) suggest that school improvement depends fundamentally on leadership and organizational structures that indirectly and directly promote effective teaching.

Goodlad (1979) points out that the single school is the key unit for change and improvement. He emphasizes the importance of the school's having a sense of mission that pervades every aspect of its functioning. He believes that the principal is the key to the attainment of the school's goals. Research on effective schools (e.g., Brookover, 1979; Edmonds, 1981) continually points out that the principal is the key

to local school improvement.

With these findings in mind, it appears that the proper organizational climate for the successful implementation of the many recommendations emerging from state and national reports is through a form of school district organization that makes the individual school the unit where significant decisions regarding educational programs are made. This decentralized form of organization is often referred to as "School Based Management."

School based management is based on several broad philosophical postures.* These include:

1. Participatory Planning and Decision-Making

   Realizing that school-based management sometimes creates frustration and is often slower than more autocratic models, participation is a philosophical foundation for this approach. This participation is not limited to the principal but includes all staff at every level.

2. Full Utilization of Existing Resources

   Each person in the organization is seen as a positive contributor and is encouraged to move toward greater involvement.

3. Ownership

   School based management recognizes that participation in decision-making creates ownership and therefore leads to a more positive attitude towards the organization.

4. Planning

   Planning is a necessary and important part of school based management. Planning must involve the total organization.

5. School Effectiveness Research

   The five general factors contributing to achievement are strong administrative instructional leadership, orderly school environment, emphasis on basic skills acquisition, monitoring of pupil progress, and high expectations for student achievement.

School-based management is an educational model for a participatory management philosophy which shows promise for stimulating the development of effective schools. It requires a commitment from the school board and the superintendent. Each district must decide how it will implement school-based management and how much authority will

be delegated to the local school. Implementation may necessitate a district to develop a comprehensive reorganizational plan which includes consideration of the following:

- The establishment of a district level management team to make shared decisions on all phases of district activities
- A clear distinction between the management line and the staff divisions
- A redefinition of job responsibilities and accountabilities for both line and staff
- A reorganization within Central Office divisions to better support the organizational structure
- The development of a communication system between the management line division and the staff divisions to monitor and facilitate action on needs and concerns initiated by school-based teams.

While school-based models might include many different characteristics, the following have emerged as the important considerations:

1. The model is based on the realization that every school has different needs and therefore, should be responded to with different resources.
2. The model reverses the traditional educational approach and allows central staff to serve the needs of local schools rather than forcing local schools to develop identical programs based on the direction of central staff without taking into consideration the individual makeup of the schools.
3. The model encourages total participation in making the local school more effective. Total participation includes all school staff, central office staff and the community. All resources are focused directly toward the school and the students.
4. The model gives principals more decision-making authority for:
    a. Program Development
    b. School Budgeting
    c. Staffing Patterns
    d. Staff Development
5. Each school functions with a local school management team. This team is made up of the principal, teachers, parents, and community support persons.
6. Each principal receives intensive training in management practices.
7. Each school team also goes through training in management practices.

8. Each team develops school improvement plans based on the Effective Schools Research. These plans are carefully monitored on a monthly basis by activity.

9. Each school based management school receives an internal liaison person who works with that school team and the district to facilitate program development. Monthly meetings are held to review progress and develop additional directions.

10. Each school based management school receives a school/business partner who will assist the principal and the team in management practices and in providing additional resources.

11. Each school based management team has the flexibility to develop efficiency proposals to be presented to the school district's administrative management team for exceptional programs. These proposals might include:

    a. Development of a model summer school program

    b. Development of a specialized summer scheduling effort

    c. Experimental reading program

    d. Development of an academic optional program

12. Each school based management school is given a $2,000 incentive grant to implement school improvement plans.

The goal of school based management is to improve student achievement by allowing schools the flexibility (within certain parameters) to plan and implement strategies using available resources. On the other hand, the school will be held accountable for results.

The successful implementation of district, state, or national recommendations depends upon the involvement of the key participants in the school system. Each district must identify an organizational structure that will encourage a commitment from those persons who are closely associated with the local school.

Brookover, W. School Social Systems and Student Achievement: Schools Can Make A Difference. New York: A.J.T. Bergin Publishers, 1979.

Edmonds, R. The Characteristics of Effective Schools' Research and Implementation. Michigan: Michigan State University, 1981.

Fullan, M. The Meaning of Educational Change. New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 1982.

Goodlad, J. "Can Our Schools Get Better?" Phi Delta Kappan, 1979, 60(5) 342-347.

Purkey, S. C., and Smith, M. S. "Effective Schools - A Review". Elementary School Journal, 1983, 83 (4), 426-452.

Rosenholtz, S., Hawley, W.D., and Goodstein, H. A. Strategies and Practices That Improve Student Achievement. (Report to the Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Education.) Nashville, TN.: Vanderbilt University, George Peabody College for Teachers, July, 1983.

ROLE GUIDE #3

THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS: (OR, HOW TO RUN A FINE TUNED MACHINE)

by Sandra Winecoff, Principal
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Columbia, South Carolina
and
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Department of Educational Leadership
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University of South Carolina

Introduction

Walking through an "effective school" one has the feeling of being inside a precision machine. There is a sense of order and calm in the classrooms, halls and on the playground. Students are on task and stimulating lessons are being taught - lessons emphasizing mastery of the school's identified goals. Student work is displayed. One senses the increased productivity compared to past years. Challenging science activities are evident, student research projects are being presented, computers are in use and one class is on its way to the University library to research classical authors.

Several bulletin boards highlight positive self concepts and the idea that "everyone can". The principal is discussing with a teacher the samples of written compositions that students have produced on a weekly basis to achieve the school's standard for written work. One is impressed with the feeling that everyone in the school believes that each student can learn and can master basic skills. A parent is working in the health room. Another is conferencing with a teacher on ways to help Johnny at home.

It is evident that each part of the machine is in tune. The entire organization works closely together to ensure that all students will be performing at or above

agreed upon standards unless there is an identified learning problem. Ask anyone in the school and they will tell you that, "Basic academic development for all is our foremost goal."

How did this school reach such a high level of productivity? The change did not occur overnight. Long hours of work and a dedication to the theme "Let's be the best we can be" had to come first. Leading the way toward improvement was the principal. What he/she did was not magic. Research on effective schools was gathered and an action plan developed and implemented. That action plan centered around ten key characteristics of effective leadership.

Ten Characteristics of Effective Principals

Ten characteristics of the effective principal are presented below. They are not presented in any priority order. For truly effective instruction to occur, a principal must display a substantial degree of each of the ten characteristics. For specific research data supporting each characteristic, the reader is encouraged to review the reference list contained in the bibliography at the end of this section.

Characteristic I: Effective Principals Have A Commitment To Academic Goals

Effective principals place their greatest emphasis on academic achievement. While extra- and co-curricular activities are not totally excluded from the school activities, students as well as parents and staff are made aware that the primary purpose and emphasis in the instructional setting will be on achievement of a prescribed code of basic knowledge.

Characteristic II: Effective Principals Create A Climate Of High Expectations

Study of effective schools emphasizes the importance of expectations. Students tend to produce at the level that is expected or demanded of them. Effective principals believe that a student, regardless of socio-economic or ethnic background, can produce at an acceptable level.

These principals are identifiable because they:

1. Work with teachers to modify instructional approaches instead of blaming lack of academic success on the student. Such principals are aware that students learn at differing paces, through varying learning styles and with a multitude of motivational considerations. If one method is not successful, the fault is with the method, not because the student can't.
2. Work with teachers to see that all students are treated fairly during the learning process. He or she encourages teachers to provide each student adequate response time. Groupings of students reflect more heterogeneity than homogeneity in the school managed by an effective principal. And, students from lower socio-economic levels make proportionately equivalent academic growth in basic skill mastery as students who come from adequate home backgrounds.
3. Work with teachers to see that praise is used judiciously. When real and meaningful efforts are made by students, he or she insists that positive reinforcement is given. Conversely, when students perform below their capabilities, the effective principal encourages teachers to respectfully but firmly make students aware that expectations aren't being met.

Characteristic III: Effective Principals Plan The Instructional Program

Effective schools have been identified as those wherein the staff carefully directs the learning experiences of students. Effective principals expect teachers to develop written plans for the total academic year. In effective schools, the instructional staff knows in September when course or subject objectives will be taught during the year.

Effective principals also encourage careful weekly preparation. Written plans delineating the purpose of each lesson, the activities to be carried out, the materials needed, and the groupings to be used are developed by each instructional

staff member. As a result when a class session begins, the principal has greatly increased the likelihood of all necessary lesson components being ready and available.

Characteristic IV: Effective Principals Emphasize Technical Competence

Effective principals encourage use of techniques and procedures that produce effective instruction. They are aware of and consistently work to have staff incorporate proven instructional skills and procedures into lesson presentation. In such schools, a visitor would note that the principal has encouraged each teacher to have at least the following components in each lesson: An explanation of the purpose of the lesson or learning experience; creation of excitement about or anticipation of the lesson; variation of instructional approaches and instructional aids; smooth transition from one lesson or learning experience to the next; continual evaluation and feedback to students concerning the learning experience; active involvement of students in the learning activity; provision for enrichment or re-instruction after the initial lesson; and a summary or closure to each lesson.

Characteristic V: Effective Principals Purposefully Manage The School Environment

Schools of effective principals are those wherein emphasis is on productivity. The tone is purposefully set from the first day of school. School-wide and class expectations are made clear and concise. Consequences of inappropriate behavior are explained and thereafter immediately and fairly enforced. Parents are made aware of expectations and rules and are kept abreast of problems and positive behaviors. Students are involved in rule setting and are helped to develop a sense of pride in belonging to that school.

Characteristic VI: Effective Principals Monitor Student Progress On A Regular Basis

Effective principals are constant users of both formative and summative tests. As the instructional program is delivered, they monitor the degree to which objectives are met. As importantly, effective principals work with teachers to be sure that previous evaluative results are used to plan the upcoming learning experiences of the

students. Particular emphasis is given to matching curriculum delivered with an appropriate test or other measure of accountability for each particular program.

Characteristic VII: Effective Principals Use Resources Wisely

In all effective schools there is an expressed purpose or mission. Goals and objectives are established for both the individual students and the school as a whole. However, beyond goal setting there is an equal commitment of resources in direct relation to the priorities established in that school. Effective principals expend funds, time and energy in direct relationship to the learning priorities.

Characteristic VIII: Effective Principals Pursue Continuous Professional Improvement

Effective principals are those that continually strive to improve themselves and those with whom they work. They regularly participate in classroom visitations and offer constructive criticism to improve teaching approaches. In addition, effective principals seek out learning opportunities for themselves by participating in formal inservice activities and enrolling in college course work beyond the minimum required to meet recertification requirements. Effective principals also seek out informal professional experiences through visitation of other schools, reading of educational journals, and participation in professional associations.

Characteristic IX: Effective Principals Optimize Student Time-On-Task

Effective principals are cognizant of the fact that a chief indicator of student academic success is the amount of time spent in active learning. They utilize practices that increase time-on-task. Effective principals:

1. Encourage Student Attendance: Unless the student is in school, he or she can't learn. Tardies are not condoned, absences are closely monitored and parents are contacted regularly. Disciplinary action is "in school".
2. Allocate Instructional Time Wisely: Class time is allocated by instructional priority. More time is spent on academics than co-curricular or administrative/clerical activities. Special emphasis is given to starting classes

on time, "sticking to" the schedule, discouraging drop-in visitors, minimizing general announcements, reducing change time between activities, and reducing "pull out" time.

3. Encourage Active Learning: Students learn best if proven instructional approaches are used. Time-on-task increases when instruction a) is based on previous learning, b) is focused, c) allows direct student involvement, d) permits students as much direct teacher contact as possible, e) minimizes unguided seatwork and f) is kept interesting.
4. Model Good Use Of Time: Students and teachers will not practice what principals are only willing to preach. Students and teachers will positively use their own time only if principals don't use time as an excuse themselves, are on time, don't ignore tardies and absences, are prepared, and prioritize their own use of time.

Characteristic X: Effective Principals Truly Care About Their Students

Effective principals are those that put in more time than required, volunteer for study committees, and actively seek out resources when necessary to obtain required supplies. They are those that are willing to pick up a piece of trash in the hall, or contact parents after school hours. These principals are the ones that attend school board meetings though not required, and serve on various advisory committees with a smile. As importantly, effective principals are those that use only professional terms to discuss students and staff, do not criticize students or other teachers in open forum, and display a quiet sense of honesty, integrity, and purpose.

Summary Of Needed Skills To Run The Fine Tuned Machine

Before beginning the process of helping others improve be sure to assess your own "effective skills". In this regard, do you have:

- A commitment to academic development for all students and the ability to model and communicate these expectations?
- The flexibility to effectively assess the school climate (learning environment)?
- The ability to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional techniques and curricula for a particular student group?
- The knowledge of what makes an effective teacher?
  Can you demonstrate effective teaching?
- Sensitivity to the effects socio-economic background have on the development of curriculum?
- Sensitivity to the emotional and instructional needs of faculty related to change?
- The ability to design effective in-service activities?
- Skills in group dynamics (for parent and teacher groups)?
- The ability to communicate goals to faculty, students, and community?
- The ability to allocate time and other resources based on priorities?

Schools can be effective only to the extent to which those who work within them strive for excellence. An administrator sets the tone and leads the way toward excellence. If excellence is to be reached, the characteristic and accompanying skills which depict the effective principal must manifest themselves in the instructional leadership of the school. Why not begin today to make your school the very best it can be? Unless you lead the way, it cannot be done!

ROLE GUIDE #4

THE TEACHER IN THE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

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Introduction

The fact that students achieve more in some schools than others has led researchers to conclude that schools make a difference. It is logical to assume that teachers make a difference also. Without effective teachers, effective schools could not exist. On the other hand, effective teaching can occur in particular classrooms within a school that is not judged to be completely "effective". In other words, individual teachers can strive to become more effective in their classroom work even when others in the building or school district do not follow procedures or pursue goals that have been found to characterize the effective school.

Certain attitudes are characteristic of teachers who are effective in the classroom. They see the school as more than a work place. They take pride in their work and personally accept responsibility for the success of classroom activities.

Such teachers recognize the effect their attitudes can have on student learning and follow the procedures used by the "effective" teachers described in research. They establish a comfortable and pleasant environment for students that communicates that learning is the purpose of classroom activity. Teachers who are able to implement new techniques provide leadership to help others in their building employ new routines and practices. These teacher-leaders

are also willing to accept the leadership of others. But they do so in a discriminating way insuring that basic principles and practices are not modified or adapted to an extent that completely subverts the goal of change.

Effective teachers demonstrate a positive attitude in dealing with those outside the professional community as well. They expect students to be successful and try to provide each child with opportunities to grow intellectually. Teachers in an effective school must accept responsibility for initiating and maintaining good relationships between the home and school. They must also work to stimulate in the community a spirit of ownership and school pride. The discussion that follows describes the teacher role as it relates to each of the criteria that characterize effective schools, outlining the specific responsibilities and particular actions that are in the teacher's domain if a school is to be effective.

Teacher Role

Safe and Orderly Environment

The teacher is solely responsible for all that transpires in the classroom, but the teacher is also responsible for contributing to the maintenance of a proper atmosphere throughout the school building. The way students are treated in the classroom will influence their behavior both inside and outside the room. Teachers must plan carefully for the use of class time so that students are continuously involved in interesting and productive activity. The teacher should also establish and clearly communicate classroom rules. Rules should be described to guide behavior at other places in the school as well (e.g., halls, lavatories, lunchroom, library, etc.).

Teachers must remember two important principles about classroom and school rules. First, there should not be too many rules for students to remember and for teachers to monitor. Second, teachers must be consistent in applying the rules. The teacher's response in similar situations at different times with different students must be the same. It is also critical that the penalty

for breaking the same rule in the same way is the same for all students.

Teachers can do much to maintain an appropriate classroom environment in subtle ways. Furniture should be arranged and space should be used effectively. Students should have enough space and have the appropriate conditions to carry out the tasks that are assigned without undue distraction or discomfort. Teachers should also foster positive interpersonal relationships among students. An environment characterized by cooperative, goal directed activity is characteristic of a classroom where learning can and will occur.

Outside the classroom the teacher must be a partner with others in the building. Teachers who ignore students' misbehavior in the hall or other places on school grounds have not accepted responsibility for the schools' becoming effective. On the positive side teachers should demonstrate their concern and interest in the school to students. They can do this by attending and, when appropriate, participating in extracurricular activities. Teacher presence at such events makes a statement to students about the teacher's interest in the school and the students that cannot be made in any other way.

Clear and Focused School Mission

The teacher should also accept responsibility for insuring that the school has a clear and focused mission. The teacher must voice opinions and participate in formal discussions of the school's goals and philosophy. Teachers should collaborate in the development of appropriate and useful curriculum guides. Teachers should also raise questions and make suggestions for new projects and efforts to be pursued by the staff. Finally, the teacher should support the accepted policies and procedures of the school. If such practices are inappropriate the teacher should accept responsibility for initiating efforts to review and revise the current practices.

Instructional Leadership

The following actions describe ways that teachers can function as instruc-

tional leaders. They should:

(1) strive to be informed by attending professional meetings. reading professional journals, and being enthusiastic participants in staff development activities.

(2) share new ideas and positive classroom experiences with peers.

(3) follow the leadership of the building principal by attempting to implement new practices and procedures.

(4) provide suggestions for the modification of school curriculum.

(5) apply new ideas in your classroom setting.

Climate of High Expectations

Teachers in effective classrooms believe that all students can demonstrate mastery of the work given to them. These expectations will generate enthusiasm and encourage students to do their best work. High goals must be set for students to strive to attain. A teacher should be aware of students' strengths and weaknesses. Research shows that students' achievement conforms closely to teachers' expectations. Effective teachers accept the responsibility for students' failures as well as their successes. They try to establish a cooperative learning environment that also involves some level of competition. Such an environment allows students to participate in mixed ability groups rather than always being associated with students who have the same limitations and strengths.

Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

Classroom instruction can meet the needs of all students if teachers plan activities effectively. Materials and demonstrations that stimulate learning in different modalities should be used. For example, students should have visual and kinesthetic experiences to accompany the teachers auditory explanations. Classroom management techniques must be employed to insure that students use the time allocated for learning. The teachers' planning should reflect consideration of both long-term and short-term goals.

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

Effective teachers monitor the progress of their students on a regular basis. They give appropriate tests to all students that help determine the pacing of instruction. Standardized tests are also consulted and used to determine what should be emphasized in classroom lessons. There should also be frequent and open communications with parents. Daily classwork, homework assignments, and test papers might be sent to parents to allow them to observe and monitor students' successes and failures.

Tests provide a method for teachers and schools to monitor their effectiveness. "A school is absolutely effective if the proportion of its lowest Socio-Economic Status (SES) pupil population demonstrating minimum academic mastery is identical to the proportion of its highest S.E.S. pupil population demonstrating minimum academic mastery."

Home-School-Community Relations

Effective teachers can pursue a number of efforts to improve Home-School-Community relations. The teacher should try to learn about students as individuals. What are their interests and goals? Do they have any serious difficulties in their lives? When the teacher demonstrates concern and interest the student gains a feeling of pride and self-worth.

Teachers should conduct sensitive and constructive discussions with parents. Parents should be informed of both the positive and negative events in a child's school life. The teacher should attempt to communicate an interested and caring attitude to the parents that reveals true concern about the child.

At the same time, teachers should attempt to promote the good reputation of the school in the community. Community representatives should be welcome in classrooms and, in fact, encouraged to participate in special events. Teachers can do much to make parents and other community members feel comfortable in the school setting.

ROLE GUIDE #5

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND EFFECTIVE PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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Introduction

Historically, parent involvement in public education has focused on public relations and fund raising. Public relations are best described as activities and efforts on the part of parents to promote and endorse what the school is doing academically and socially. Fund raising activities have taken the form of Booster Clubs, P.T.A.s, or special interest group fund raising, supporting the "extra" needs of their group. School administrators have asked the parent groups to support issues or positions without involvement of parents in the planning or implementation process. To a large extent, parents have traditionally been seen as "arms length" friends but rarely as full partners in education.

The traditional role has placed parents in the "helping hands" category to deal with the logistics of running a school or providing "extras" in an era of tight budgets. Parents have had a place in the system to: supervise extra-curricular activities, attend PTA meetings, come to parent-teacher conferences, help with the open house, provide volunteer labor at the school, work in the library, or serve on an advisory committee, etc. In summary, few examples of parent involvement have focused on student academic achievement.

Appropriate Parent Involvement for Effective Schools

Schools should provide parents with basic information about the school and promote a positive school image. However, the extent to which these efforts actually impact student achievement for all students is questionable

(Brookover 1982). Schools striving for academic effectiveness must also strive for a new type of parent involvement; one that directly supports their students' academic program. The administration and faculty must be committed to the notion of parents as full partners in the education process. In fact, the decisions the administration and staff make about what people (including parents) should do to promote student achievement often reflect the major difference between a high and low achieving school. This perspective holds true not only for what the staff does at school, but also what the school should expect from parents at home (Brookover, et al. 1982).

The effective schools research is beginning to show evidence that when schools do not clearly explain to parents how they can assist in their child's achievement or firmly communicate that parents are expected to support their child's academic efforts, then the school is less likely to be successful academically. The school must decide what it wants parents to do to enhance the classroom academic experience at home. This message must then be constantly communicated with conviction to parents, even if there is not mechanism with which to enforce this message. There must also be clear expectations and efforts to involve parents in the planning and implementation of the academic effort.

This guide addresses Home-School Relations and how schools and parents can best pursue academic effectiveness as partners.

Parent Support and Parent Involvement

If parents are to assist the school in its efforts to raise achievement, serious discussion by the principal, teachers and parents should result in a plan of action for parent involvement and support. To begin this discussion, a distinction should be made between parent involvement and parent support.

Parent Involvement - Refers to ways parents show support by participation at school or in school sponsored activities. Parent involvement means coming

to school or helping with a school project or concern outside of regular family life or home activities. Examples include: attending parent/teacher conferences, acting as a volunteer tutor, assisting the teacher in the classroom, attending PTA meetings, etc. The focus of involvement is direct contact between the parent and the school.

Parent Support - Refers to any means by which parent actions or attitudes reinforce the academic program of the school at home. Examples include: parents showing support for the school at home by modeling and reinforcing academic behaviors valued by the school (e.g., using time wisely, doing your best work, showing responsibility, paying attention, etc.). Parent support may be shown by all parents, including those whose work schedules or family responsibilities make it difficult or impossible for them to come to school (Brookover et al. 1982).

The purpose of making these distinctions is not to make value judgments as to whether parent involvement activities are better than parent support. However, the "effective schools" studies reveal that for schools to place their main thrust with parents on a "come to the school" basis will meet with limited academic impact. The greatest potential for increasing student achievement is supportive parents in the home. What schools must do is determine significant ways to use family/home relationships to promote the academic goals of the school. This is not to say that pupil capacity for mastery of minimum school skills is dependent on family background. There are few parental behaviors, short of abuse, so debilitating as to deny the student the ability to acquire basic academic skills. Therefore, if students don't succeed, schools must recognize that they are primarily responsible. This position does not deny the existence of the family/background effect on achievement. However, this effect occurs somewhere beyond minimum mastery of basic skills. Middle class children as a group still out-perform poor

children as a group and this occurance does have something to do with family background (Edmonds 1983). Research shows that schools do exist that have the universal capacity to bring all of their students to the minimum levels of academic achievement. Their success has not been dependent upon the schools location or family backgrounds of their students. Academically effective schools do, however, clearly define the parent role as partners in the learning process.

Improving Parent Participation

Parent support for schools usually suffers from school neglect. Too often, it is not clear whether anyone is in charge--or for what they are responsible. For example, teachers may feel developing parent support is the principal's job. The principal may feel this is the responsibility of the teachers or a parent organization. The parents, on the other hand, expect the school staff to take the lead so they sit back and wait to hear from the school. The net result is minimal parent participation in academics. If the school is to shape its own destiny, the school must provide leadership in organizing parental support of academic goals. It must be clearly understood that getting parent support is everyone's responsibility and everyone is expected to do his/her part to make it successful. In most schools, the principal is the ideal person to provide the leadership impetus and coordination required for mobilizing teachers and parents. The issue of parent support for improving achievement should be thoroughly discussed by both staff and parents; priorities and needs identified; a program of action planned; and specific tasks assigned. For greatest results, this should be done early in the school year so plans can be written, communicated and begun (Brookover et al. 1982).

The faculty should communicate clearly and simply the need for parent support and involvement activities which result in high student achievement.

The staff might begin by designing a strategy for parant support that coordinates school and home efforts. The faculty should establish a norm for parent behavior that encourages student success in school. This norm, expressed in parent beliefs, expectations, and actions, does, in effect, establish a home learning climate.

It is not intended that the school dictate to parents how they should live or behave at home in order to be "good" parents. Rather, the school should express to parents what they can do to increase their child's chances of being an academic success. The school faculty must explain exactly what it does; what the curriculum is all about; what the homework, attendance, and discipline policies are, and the like. Having done this, the school plan for parent support/involvement should present specific ways that parents can create a home learning climate that is consistent with and supportive of the school academic program.

The School Plan for Parent Support

A school plan should address both parent support and involvement. Emphasis should be on parent support since <u>all parents can be expected to give support at home</u> but not all parents can be involved at school. It should be easily understood and clearly identified what parents can do at home or school to promote student achievement. In drafting the plan, the following guidelines should be considered:

1. Clearly state what the school wants and expects parents to do.
2. Be realistic in terms of demands upon parent time.
3. Identify a variety of ways parents can help either at home or at school.
4. Develop the plan so that everyone can do something.

In other words, spell out the plan, keep it simple, offer choices and expect every parent to help. The school plan must be acceptable to parents, but the staff should assume responsibility for drafting the plan with parent

input. Ownership comes from involvement in a process of staff/parent interaction. This interaction is critical and must not be circumvented.

Drafting a plan should provide opportunity for discussion, brainstorming, expression of feelings and attitudes, presentation of information, identification of needs and expectations, and resolution of conflict. This process may take several meetings, so provisions should be made for adequate discussion. Failure of a staff to invest sufficient time in exploration, planning, and communication will lessen the probability for genuine acceptance or ownership by the staff.

An organizational time/task chart should be developed so the plan can proceed in an orderly and definitive manner. Once it is acceptable to the staff, the plan should be presented to a representative parent committee for review and preliminary reactions. If serious concerns are identified in the parent review process, the staff should consider revision. However, the plan must ultimately represent the needs of students. Hopefully, there will not be any serious differences between the school plan and parents needs. If there is, an effort to educate parents on the efficacy of improving the home learning climate might be necessary.

A distinction should be made between the school plan for parent support and involvement and the school plan for improvement (School Improvement Plan). In the parent plan, the staff specifies what parents should do to support the school and student achievement. The School Improvement Plan, however, outlines and directs what the school will do to achieve programmatic improvement for all students.

The mere distribution of a parent plan will not result in significant changes in parent or student behavior. The plan only represents an attempt at clarity of purpose and coordination between home and school. For maximum success, provisions must be made by the school to promote parent understanding and follow-through. It is suggested that following distribution of the plan

to all parents, meetings should be held at school and in neighborhoods to explain:

1. The school program for improving achievement;
2. The plan for parent support and involvement to reinforce the school program;
3. The parent actions requested and expected by the school.

Requesting the help of parent groups, such as the PTA/PTO, the Advisory Council, homeroom parents, block clubs, etc., to set up meetings will be of great assistance. The principal and teachers should be present to answer questions and demonstrate their sincerity and desire to work cooperatively with parents. Failure to conduct discussion meetings with parents in addition to merely sending the plan home will ensure little or no impact. An example of a school plan for parent support follows which is taken from an excellent publication entitled Creating Effective Schools.

(SAMPLE)

School Plan for Parent Support/Involvement

Having each student achieve high levels of academic performance is the most important goal of our school. Having parents that support this goal will make it happen. We need the help of every parent. The school must have your support and involvement this year if we are to be successful.

The _____ School staff is counting on you to SUPPORT your child in becoming a high achiever. As a parent, the school expects you to show your child, through words and actions, that you SUPPORT:

A. The School's Academic Program

1. The student achievement goals.
2. The school homework policy.
3. The school attendance policy.
4. The school discipline plan.
5. Parent-teacher conference/schedule.

NOTE: All of these areas should be defined in writing and given to <u>all</u> parents and students.

B. A Good Home Learning Climate

1. Encourage and expect high performance from your child for schoolwork, household duties, and other responsibilities. Insist on success and doing the job right.
2. Show interest in what your child does each day in the classroom-know what is going on.
3. Provide proper conditions for home study:
    a) definite study time
    b) quiet and non-distracting conditions
4. Limit time spent watching TV.
5. Provide supervision to ensure your child receives adequate rest, nutrition and physical exercise.

Schools cannot mandate involvement--but we can make involvement so important that it becomes non-negotiable in the planning process. To the extent your schedule permits, we encourage you to be INVOLVED in the school by:

1. Contacting the school for information or to resolve a concern.
2. Volunteering to help with at least one (1) school activity.
3. Attending at least one (1) P.T.A. meeting a semester.
4. Visiting your child's classroom at least one (1) time during the year.

The _____ School staff has high expectations for your child's academic achievement this year. We need your cooperation, support and involvement.

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The list of reasons why parents aren't involved in the school program is endless but the potential to turn it around is as great today as it has ever been. All parents - low or high income, black, white, brown, or red, deprived or advantaged - share a strong common desire: success for their children. As Marva Collins, a successful teacher in the inner city of Chicago, stated on 60 Minutes (CBS, 1979), "I have never met a parent yet that wants their child to fail." This desire for student success is the same as the goal of the school and the purpose for which it was created. However, parent support and involvement do not come easily. The challenge for the school is to take the initiative and tap parent concern for student success.

Suggested Activities for Parent Support and Involvement
Adapted from Creating Effective Schools, Learning Publications, Holmes Beach, Florida, 1982

1. Select a planning committee of parents and staff members (including the principal) to head the parent participation thrust for the year. An existing School Advisory Council could easily serve as the committee if desired. Representatives from parent groups such as P.T.A., Chapter I, grade levels, etc. may be asked to join the committee. A chairperson should be identified to provide leadership. This group should be formed at the beginning of the school year and act as a standing committee.
2. Discuss topics of parent support and involvement in a whole staff meeting early in the school year. Brainstorm on best and most feasible methods of utilizing parents to improve achievement. Narrow choices down to not more than a few items each for support and involvement. Write these ideas in the form of a simplified, one-page "School Plan for Parent Support and Involvement."
3. Review the draft of the plan with the official, representative committee of the parents of the school. This review is for parent reaction as to the appropriateness and clarity of the plan. Parent suggestions for modification of the plan should be accommodated as long as the concerns for academic achievement are not diverted.
4. Decide on methods of distributing the plan and discussing it with parents. Consider including the plan in the Annual School Improvement Report summary. Face-to-face meetings are essential, as parent reactions must be encouraged and opportunities for

answering questions should be accommodated. Plan for maximum parent participation by meeting both at school and in the community at hours convenient to parents. The principal and certain teacher representatives should attend all meetings.

5. Methods of keeping the attention of parents on the plan throughout the year should be identified by the planning committee. Activities planned in conjunction with regular school events at least three (3) times a year should suffice, e.g., fall open house (October), mid-winter (February), and spring parent conferences (April). Some possible activities include:
    a. Academic recognition awards presented at all school activities.
    b. "Thank you for your support" communications.
    c. Reports concerning parent support for academics highlighted in the school newsletter and at monthly parent meetings.
    d. Publicity about the plan arranges with local newspapers and radio/TV stations.
    e. Periodic reminders about following through on the plan sent to parents by teachers (e.g., a particular item could be featured).

The school planning committee should decide early in the year how to enlist parent participation and when special activities will occur to maintain parent interest. The important thing is to make parent follow-through on the plan a major--and regular--thrust of the school.

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ROLE GUIDE #6

THE COMMUNITY EDUCATOR AND EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

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Introduction

While many schools and school districts do not have a staff member identified by the title of community educator, most districts and schools have a person who assumes responsibility for communicating with and involving the community in the life of the school. This guide applies to either community educators or those persons in the school or school district who have the responsibility for school-community relations.

Community educators in this country have increasingly become aware of the need "to make community education an integral part of the regular school program" (Thomas, p. 4), but have seldom found the opportunity, means or processes to accomplish this goal. The effective school movement offers an ideal opportunity since it is, according to Lezotte (1982 p. 7), "a process not an event" involving community members as well as professional educators.

However, community educators perhaps view effective schools from a little different perspective than do other role groups. To be effective a school not only has to be effective as an entity in and of itself, but also effective in terms of the broader community. Effectiveness is the product of shared responsibility between school and community and to that end schools desiring to be effective must provide for quality interface with parents, non-parents, the business community, and the broader public sector. In short, school effectiveness, in the eye of the community educator, must be judged not only in terms of student related factors but also the extent to which the quality of life of the total community is enhanced.

Responsibilities

The community educator, as a facilitator and link with the community, can play a vital role in the development and maintenance of effective schools. A preliminary role should be to help the principal, teachers, parents and community members become

aware of effective school research and move toward a decision to become a more effective school. Once such a decision is agreed upon, the community educator can serve a vital role as facilitator assisting the school community to proceed through a school improvement process consisting of at least the following major phases:

1. Establish climate of acceptance and support for school improvement among members of the school community,

2. Organize a school improvement team composed of the principal, teachers, parents and community members (students might be included in junior and senior high schools),

3. Assess school needs using effective school criteria as a standard (comprehensive assessment processes and instruments have been developed in a number of states such as Colorado, Connecticut, New York, and for middle schools at the University of North Carolina's Center for Early Adolescence),

4. Develop a school Improvement Plan based on the results of the assessment including at least specific goals, objectives, strategies, and a timeline for implementation,

5. Implement the school improvement plan and closely monitor progress,

6. Evaluate results on an annual basis.

As an integral part of the school improvement team, the community educator will have a great deal to offer related to each of the effective school criteria.

1. Safe and Orderly Environment

   The involvement of additional adult "helping hands" in a school can do much to create a safe and orderly environment. Volunteer programs to assist teachers with tutoring, playground/cafeteria/hall supervision, supervising time out rooms or in-school suspension areas can help create a much improved learning environment. The mobilization of personnel from other agencies (mental health, youth services, and the like) to help with the disruptive students both at school and in their homes allows the classroom teacher to give priority to the learning task. Numerous other programs can also help establish a more conducive learning environment such as the police liaison and junior deputy programs, big brother and big sister, listener program (to provide an adult as a non-judgemental listener on a regular weekly basis), and business/industry adopt-a-school efforts - all provide additional adults whose presence and influence can create a more stable, conducive learning environment which meets the academic as well as the psycho-social needs of young people.

2. Clear and Focused School Mission

   The community educator is in a unique position not only to assist the

school improvement team in developing a clearly articulated school mission, but in making sure that the total school community is aware of and strongly supports the mission. By arranging for small community or block meetings to discuss and provide input into the mission and the school improvement plan as they are being developed, a greater sense of shared ownership can be obtained and therefore, a greater degree of acceptance and support. Once developed, the entire community should be made aware of school goals, objectives, behavior codes, and school procedures through a major dissemination effort including meetings, mailings, telephone chains, school programs, publications such as school handbooks, mission and goals brochures and basic skills or objective lists.

3. Instructional Leadership

The school principal is clearly the instructional leader in effective schools. The community educator can assist the principal in this effort by providing community resources to help with curriculum development, in-service programs, materials development or to serve as classroom volunteers to allow teachers more time for developing new or innovative approaches to instruction. The community educator should be readily available to facilitate problem solving and planning sessions and to assist the school improvement team as it carries out its responsibilities.

4. Climate of High Expectations

A sustained climate of high expectations is best developed through the combined efforts of the school faculty, the principal and the parents. A two-way flow of "high expectation" communications should run continuously between the school, the community and the students. Community educators can regularly enhance the quality of this communications flow through student newsletters, the creation of "high expectation" awards, parent education tips, parent classes, and the like. The community educator, perhaps more than others at the school, can exhibit "high expectations" in all transactions and act as a role model for students, faculty, and parents.

5. Opportunity to Learn and Student Time On Task

Student time on task can be significantly increased through the use of trained volunteer tutors. The tutor, by working with individual and small groups of students, on planned learning activities, frees the teacher from responsibility for the total class and thus allows more direct teacher contact time with specific students. Three keys to a successful tutoring program are: teacher-tutor developed learning activities; tutor training; and a systematic volunteer management program to insure that tutors are present when and where needed. Again, the community educator's role is to mobilize community resources, help teachers and tutors plan, provide training for teachers and tutors, and develop a sound volunteer management system.

6. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

The teacher is obviously the person responsible for monitoring the progress of each student, however, tutors and clerical aides can relieve the teacher of many of the activities involved in the grading and recording of student progress. The community educator plays essentially the same role as in

time-on-task (#5) by making trained community volunteers available to teachers.

7. Home-School-Community Relations

Effective school research indicates that it is not so much the general degree or quantity of parent and community involvement in schools that is important but rather the degree of parent initiated involvement that makes a difference (Edmunds, 1979, p. 30). What is critical is that parents understand and support the mission of the school and communicate this to their children. While effective school researchers admit that community involvement was often overlooked in their studies, there is considerable evidence to support the idea that "the best schools are almost always those with the most parent involvement" (Leonard, 1984, p. 52). This component might well summarize the role of the community educator in the development of effective schools. Home-school-community relations involves virtually everything mentioned under characteristics 1-6 including:

- two way communication
- media coverage
- home visits
- community/block meetings
- school advisory/improvement council support
- volunteer programs
- adopt-a-school programs
- extended day programs
- parent and adult education
- interagency cooperation
- and many others.

In short, this includes the things that good community educators do on a regular basis. Perhaps the critical difference is that of focusing activities toward the development and support of effective school characteristics, a focus which can help bring community education into the mainstream of K-12 education.

RELATED SKILLS

There are a number of skills which are very important to one wishing to be successful in this particular role. The criticality of these skills seems self apparent so the writers feel a simple listing is perhaps more appropriate in the confines of this "guide" rather than an attempt to justify each entry.

While other more specific skills might be included, the following certainly represent a core of generic skills and knowledge appropriate to the community educator's role.

Interpersonal Relations	Planning
Public Relations	Program Development
Group Process	Goal Setting
Communications	Leadership
Networking	Effective Skills
Needs Assessment	Effective Communities
	Lifelong Learning

SUMMARY

As pointed out in this guide, there are several concrete responsibilities community educators might assume, and traditionally have, in helping schools become more effective. One is clearly to facilitate the process of school improvement through a comprehensive assessment of strengths and weaknesses using effective school criteria as a standard. Such a process would provide the data needed to establish a school philosophy, mission and goals, and student learning objectives within that context. A second is to establish, or enhance the operation of, a school advisory/improvement council. Through such a council, school-community communication is strengthened and a broader support base established for developing, endorsing and achieving school goals.

The community educator also plans, develops, and implements afternoon and evening programs for all ages which on the one hand can serve to reinforce student learning objectives during after-school hours and on the other hand, bring the school and community closer together by involving community persons as both teachers and learners in such programs. A related but somewhat different responsibility would be in developing or coordinating parent education programs through which parents are helped to become integrally involved in their child's education and to support high academic expectations at home.

Not only do community educators bring parents into the educational process but hopefully the entire community. Inherent in this role is the identification and mobilization of all available resources which support the education process. Often this is accomplished in part by the development of an interagency network which serves

formally and informally as a clearinghouse for needs identification and resource deployment.

Perhaps each of the distinct roles discussed above could be subsumed under one broad role definition - that is as a proactive liaison between the school and the community. The community educator believes that effectiveness is a continuing process carried out as a joint venture between the school and the community which strives to build effective schools in effective communities

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SUMMARY

The six effective school guides which have been included in this publication, all share several important messages which hold tremendous promise for both educators and lay citizens:

1. All students can and should master basic academic skills.
2. Schools can and do make a difference.
3. Effective schools make a significant difference in the lives of all students regardless of demographic or other variables which exist.
4. The development of effective schools is best carried out where the total community is involved including school board members, administrators, teachers, parents, students and other community members.
5. The development of effective schools is a planned process.
6. The focus of the school improvement process is the individual school unit.
7. Any school with effective leadership can become an effective school.

These conclusions are based on a sound body of research which has been gradually accumulating for more than a decade. It is these messages that prompt Crain and Leventis in The School Board and Effective Schools to conclude that school board members in any district now "have a chance of improving learning for all students" (p. 4). Any school can develop a climate in which "everyone in the school believes that each student can learn and can master basic skills" (S. Winecoff and Stevenson, p. 16) and with proper planning and leadership, all students can, in fact, perform at a high level of academic achievement.

As has been pointed out, however, "effectiveness is a continuing process carried out as a joint venture between the school and the community" (Lyday and L. Winecoff, p. 40). The development of an effective school requires a firm commitment, a detailed planning process, strong leadership and the full cooperation of administrators, teachers and parents over a period of several years.

The school improvement process has been summarized in six fundamental steps:

1. Establish commitment
2. Organize a school improvement team
3. Assess present level of effectiveness
4. Develop a school improvement plan (goals, objectives, strategies) based on identified needs
5. Implement the school improvement plan
6. Monitor program and evaluate results.

Such a process can easily be developed using the seven effective school criteria as standards. The implementation of the process will take considerable time and hard work but the results are too important to disregard. We as educators and parents can no longer place the blame of student failure on other variables. We now have evidence that all children can master the basic skills at an acceptable level, that schools have the capability of achieving this goal, and that it is only our lack of attention to this end that prevents any school from becoming effective.